

February 15, 1996 LB 1050

resources of the state. The other thing is that we need to keep in mind, in this discussion, is that when we passed 1059, and I will admit that I wasn't here, but it is a statute of the state of Nebraska, it requires that we fund equalization at...we fund schools at 45 percent of the cost of education. We are not at that number, we are nowhere near that number right now, we're at about 40 percent. And it's going to require that we take some really tough decisions...make some really tough decisions about where we're going to come up with the \$71 million, and part of it has to be looking at income tax, because it's been growing so fast. What I don't want to see happen, though, and I will support the Wickersham amendment, but what I also don't want to see happen is that we...that we not accommodate a growth factor that does not escalate at the rate that the growth factor has been escalating, but that there is some room for a growth factor. And I would really argue for that. The other thing I would like to say is about Westside schools because there's been a lot of talk on the floor about Westside schools. The mill levy for Westside schools is \$1.47. Westside is not a tax haven. It is a haven for parent involvement and for commitment to education. Westside High School was named one of the hundred best schools in the nation. It was not named that because it has a great tax base, it was named that because it has...there are residents there that are committed to quality. And in this discussion, if we can keep some balance between equity and quality, I would really feel like what we're doing is fine and that we're getting at some fairness. We do need to fund...we have a commitment, it is a statutory commitment, we need to fund our state aid at 45 percent of the cost and we need to be figuring out ways on this floor to do that if we're not able and willing to do it through the income tax. Thank you.

SENATOR COORDSEN: One minute. Thank you. Before we proceed I would like to announce that Senator Robak has a guest under the south balcony, Rod Hassebrook from Platte Center. If you would rise and let us acknowledge your presence this morning. Good to have you with us. The next speaker on the list is Senator Bohlke. Senator Bohlke.

SENATOR BOHLKE: I yield my time to Senator Withem.

SENATOR COORDSEN: Senator Withem.

SPEAKER WITHEM: Yes, first of all just let me...I'd like to ask